

Shir Ami News

The Monthly Newsletter of Congregation Shir Ami
4529 Malabar Avenue, Castro Valley, CA 94546
(call (510) 537-1787 for a recording of upcoming events)

Please visit our website at

www.congshirami.org

Affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism Congregations

May, 2007



May 4	Shabbat Across America Dinner 6:30 PM; Shabbat Services – 8PM led by Joel Nickerson	May 20	School – Grades 3 & up : 9:15 AM-12:45 PM Pre K, K-2–10:30 AM – 12:45 PM Adult Ed – 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM End of Year Party-11:30 AM Annual Membership Meeting – 12:30 PM
May 6	School – Grades 3 & up : 9:15 AM-12:45 PM Pre K, K-2–10:30 AM – 12:45 PM		
May 11	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Bekah Stern	June 8	Shabbat Services – 8PM
May 12	Bat Mitzvah – Olivia Seidman 10 AM	June 21	Board Meeting – 7PM
May 13	School Grades 3 & up- 9:15 AM – 12:45 PM K-2 – 10:30 AM – 12:45 PM Adult Ed 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM	June 22	Shabbat Services – 8 PM
May 16	Rosh Chodesh – 7:30 PM	July 13	Shabbat Services – 8 PM
May 18	Shavuot & Confirmation Services – 8 PM Led by Diana Zankowsky and Sara Tunik	July 27	Shabbat Services – 8PM
		Aug 10	Shabbat Services – 8PM
		Aug 24	Shabbat Services – 8PM
		Aug 25	Religious Committee Meeting 10 AM

President's Message

Ruth Hartman

Dear Congregation Shir Ami Members and Friends,

This year's Shir Ami annual membership meeting will be **Sunday, May 20 at 12:30**. The meeting will follow an end-of-the-school-year potluck lunch and party that will start at 11:30. All are invited to the party, of course, but I particularly want to encourage members to attend the membership meeting. We will be electing our 2007-2008 Board of Directors, and also discussing and voting on *an increase in membership dues* for the coming year.

In the past year, your Board and volunteers have worked hard to provide new programs to meet the needs of our community. These programs enrich our Jewish experience, but also add to our costs. For example:

- We added a pre-K Religious School program and expanded our Confirmation Class program. Our Religious School is funded almost entirely out of membership dues. We now have 35 children enrolled in our school.
- Our Education Committee voted to adopt the Union for Reform Judaism's CHAI curriculum to strengthen the Jewish education we offer our young people.
- We helped our youth experience the joy of Jewish camps by offering a \$150 campership per child (about 7-10 children per year take advantage of this assistance), and we paid assessments for eight teens participation in Midrasha.
- We installed a security alarm system in the building and instituted security measures at our High Holiday services.
- We engaged Rachel Brott as our new cantorial soloist for the coming High Holiday season.
- We performed deferred maintenance on our building, including foundation work, repaired termite damage, and replaced a rotted-out fence. The maintenance needs of our aging building are significant and ongoing.
- We subsidized the costs of our Tu B'Shevat Seder, Community Passover Seder, and other community events to help keep them accessible to our congregants.

Much like a weight-loss program, in which you must decrease calories or increase exercise to reach your goal, the Board has only two options: we can cut expenses or increase revenues.

Your Board takes our fiscal responsibilities very seriously. We have trimmed costs where we can. But most of our basic operating costs are rising, from airfares for our rabbinic interns, to insurance costs, to utilities, to kitchen supplies.

So we need to increase our income, which comes primarily from dues, donations, and fundraising events. But most people don't like fundraising. Your Board is stretched thin planning and running programs. We don't have the time or energy it would take to mount successful fundraising efforts. And you, the members, don't seem eager to deal with repeated solicitations or fundraising events throughout the year.

All this leads to the conclusion that a dues increase is the most equitable and effective way to continue to offer a rich variety of programs and services while keeping our building safe and habitable. So we are proposing an increase in dues for the 2007-2008 membership year to \$500 for single member units and \$1000 for family units (two or more adults, or one adult with children living in the home).

As always, a dues adjustment is available for anyone for whom our dues pose a financial hardship. We value every member, and we do not want dues to be an obstacle to your membership. The process is simple; all it takes is a confidential phone call to me.

Our bylaws require that 20% of our households be represented at the annual membership meeting on **Sunday, May 20 at 12:30** in order to approve the Board slate and vote on the dues proposal. Please send at least one adult from your household to the meeting. I look forward to seeing you there.

Ruth Hartman
510-582-3379
president@congshirami.org



May 6 religious school Preschool - Confirmation

May 13 religious school K – Confirmation

May 20 religious school Preschool - Confirmation

11:30 End of year potluck

12:30 Annual Membership Meeting

As our school year winds toward summer break, I find myself thinking back on the full year we have had, as well as forward to plans for the year to come. I find it a lovely experience to hear the student's voices chanting prayers during services, and realize all that they are learning. Please join us on May 20 at 11:30 for our end of the year school potluck where we will have the opportunity to relax and enjoy each other's company, and honor and celebrate our teachers as well. You definitely don't want to miss our drama group, who will be presenting their latest play titled "*Something from Nothing*." I also want to encourage our school families to stay for the annual membership meeting following the potluck. The Shir Ami board works diligently, seriously, and sincerely to plan for the needs of our families. Please come and add your voices and support to the discussion.

Planning for next year is already underway. I have agreed to stay on as school administrator, and most of our teaching staff will be returning as well. In order to advance the Jewish education we are offering, Shir Ami will be purchasing a curriculum called CHAI from the Union for Reform Judaism. This curriculum will build on Jewish themes through your children's Religious School years. It isn't meant to be all inclusive or to replace what we have in place, but I believe it will be a great additional support tool. Additionally, I think it will be a great way to assist substitute teachers, and a help when introducing our program to interested families. A great deal of information about this curriculum can be found at www.urj.org/chai.

Our remaining three Religious School dates this year are not to be missed!! Join us for all the fun and learning.

As always,

Jodi

Adult Education *Diana Zankowsky*

The school year is rapidly drawing to a close as is Adult Education. The B’Nai Mitzvah class, with the parents, will have one last class together, the final day of the school year, May 20th. You are welcome to join the class for the entire day or join us at 10:30 for singing and the last hour. Remember, there is the school-wide end-of-year celebration beginning at 11:30 and the annual meeting following that.

Adult education (not part of the B’Nai Mitzvah class) will also have one final class on Sunday, May 13th from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm. (We will not be meeting on May 6th as was previously scheduled.) Since in Judaism, learning is never finished, we will not be concluding but we will have a Siyyum to summarize the learning we have done this year.



B’Nai Mitzvah families on May 20th for the end of the year events.

Just for Adults: May 13th from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm for a Siyyum.

Youth Group News *Leah Hartman*

Hey teens,

On May 5th we invite you to unwind from the SAT with EDJY bowling. This event is at Castro Valley Bowl in order to make it easier for Shir Ami teens to attend, so please represent. On May 17th your EDJY Programming Vice President, Michelle Ross, will be performing in a dance show including hip-hop and tap numbers. EDJY will be attending to support her. We may also be having a Shavuot sleepover at Shir Ami on May 18th, the night of the Confirmation service.

Also note that the last NFTY regional event of the year is May 11-13, so if you want an amazing weekend and an intense experience of what NFTY’s all about, you should consider going. The price is usually around two hundred dollars and bus transportation is provided from a drop off point in Lafayette. Registration closes on May 4th, so tell me if you’re interested in going and I’ll get you the forms.

Thanks so much for your time spent reading this. On a final note, EDJY board is looking for a Communications Vice President, so if you like making phone calls and want to get involved, contact me a.s.a.p. Shalom out,

Leah Hartman
Social Action Vice President

Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh Group

Jan Dombrower



Last month's Rosh Chodesh was led beautifully by Rose Firestone. First, we saw a video with sound track of the Women's Retreat put together by Rose. It was fun reliving the gathering with rituals, skits, and general connecting. It brought back fond memories.

Then, Rose educated us about the phases of the moon. This was important because our ritual revolves around the new moon and a review of the phases was interesting.

Finally, we looked at a variety of Haggadahs from old to new, orthodox to Reform. We shared stories of Passover in the past that we remembered and that were meaningful to us. We ended with refreshments and socializing.

This month Sisterhood is going to meet for Shavuot at the Cheesecake Factory at the Stoneridge Mall in Pleasanton. Because it is a tradition to eat dairy during the holiday, we will indulge in that. We will meet on Wednesday, May 16 at 7:30 in front of the restaurant and then have dessert.

The Cheesecake Factory is off of 580 in Pleasanton. Take the Foothill off-ramp and turn right onto Foothill. Then take a left into the mall and the Restaurant will be in front of you next to PF Changs. Hope to see you there.

The Tzedakah Box

A Social Action Column

Sara Lamnin

Daryl Berman

In light of recent events, we offer the following from the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation (www.actsofkindness.org)

“These Activity ideas for individuals and groups provide a wealth of kindness ideas for people, organizations, communities, and groups who want to do kindness in their area. Feel free to adapt these ideas to your own environment!”

- ☯ Plant a Kindness Tree or Garden
- ☯ Walk to a nearby park and pick up trash, then have a picnic there.
- ☯ Have each member of your family choose someone outside the family who has made a positive difference in his or her life. Write short thank-you notes, and mail the letters together.
- ☯ Discuss the best things about the area where you live, the best places to shop and have fun, etc. Have someone take notes. Then type up the ideas to give to new neighbors who move in.
- ☯ Volunteer with your family.
- ☯ Leave a bouquet of flowers on a neighbor's front step anonymously.

Upcoming Event

Help students in your community through fun and games!

June 2nd, Golden Gate Recreation Center, 1075 - 62nd Street

Oakland, CA 94608. Midday. For more details, contact Sara Lamnin (510) 583-8026

Have an event? Shared a kindness? Have an idea about how to help the community? Share it here! Contact Sara (510) 733-5114 or ledorvdor@yahoo.com

SHIR AMI BULLETIN BOARD



Interested in Learning Hebrew?

Some of our members have expressed an interest in learning to read Hebrew. If you would like to participate in a beginning adult Hebrew class, call or e-mail Judy Ganz, 581-6268, Jbganz@AOL.com and we will meet to discuss the possibilities.

Used Cell Phones Wanted

Barbara Heimowitz is still collecting used/old cell phones that you leave at Shir Ami and to send them in for cash. You can bring in your cell phones to Shir Ami anytime – just leave them in the box in the kitchen. Any questions? Please call Barbara

Used Ink Cartridges Wanted

Bruce Skelly is collecting used ink cartridges to trade in for reams of copy paper and other supplies for Shir Ami. Please bring in your used ink cartridges and place them in the box in the kitchen (by the cell phone box). Any questions? Please call Bruce.

SHIR AMI BULLETIN BOARD



Midrasha News

Our own **Evelyn Carmack**, one of 19 happy seniors who will be celebrating the completion of 5 years in the East Bay Midrasha Network of classes and retreats at their *Siyum*, or Graduation Exercises on Tuesday, May 15, 2007 in the Sanctuary of Temple Sinai. Their Tuesday evening school, Bay Area Midrasha in Oakland, will celebrate the completion of 17 years of providing quality Jewish education to teens; the public is invited. The occasion will mark not only the farewell to the current Senior class of 19 accomplished young men and women, but also will include the acknowledgement of generous grants received this year from the following important funders of Midrasha programs:

- The Jewish Community Federation and Foundation of the Greater East Bay, which nurtures the renaissance and renewal of local Jewish life, and provides life-sustaining support for Jews in need—in the East Bay, in Israel, and around the world, made education its highest priority this year. It awarded both operating funds and financial assistance to students through its Fund for Jewish Education, Pre-School through College and its Permanent Community Endowment.
- The Legacy Heritage Foundation, through its extremely generous school development grants, has made Professional Development of Midrasha teachers a special field of endeavor for this year.
- Sinai Memorial Chapel, which provides funeral services throughout the Bay Area, annually grants subventions to a variety of Jewish community institutions. At Midrasha it helps fund the Sinai Memorial Chapel Classes in the Ritual Arts.

As all Midrasha programs in the East Bay enroll students in a vast array of activities without respect to synagogue affiliation, previous religious education, or ability to pay, these grants represent an important source of funding with which to expand the Midrasha community and encourage more in-depth experiences for all students.

The Community Page

May, 2007

Yarzheits

May 4, 2007

Harriet Cohn, grandmother of Ruth Hartman

Harold Small, brother of Georgie Brooke, uncle of Sidney Simpson and Toni Schulberg, and former member of Shir Ami

May 11, 2006

Morris Berman, father of Daryl Berman

May 18, 2006

Sarah Blank, mother of Sam Blank

Arthur Kramer, father of Marion Kramer

Kaddish List

Keith Carter, brother of Bruce Carter

Syd Kramer, uncle of Jan Dombrower

Leon Meier, long-time member and founder of Shir Ami

Martin Michelson, brother-in-law of David Schulberg

Blanche Rose Berman, mother of Daryl Berman

David Teferi, father of Rahel Ruiz

May their memory be a blessing...

Ever wonder how the names read aloud for yartzheit and kaddish at Friday night services get on that list? If you're a Shir Ami member, and want a personal reminder for the yartzheit of a loved one, just send Toni Schulberg the following information: the name of the deceased; the relationship of that person to the Shir Ami member; the full date (month, day, year) that person died; and whether you want to use the Hebrew or English calendar for their yartzheit (Toni will look up the Hebrew date for you). Toni is updating the list in January, so now is the time to give her your names. Questions? Call or email Toni (278-1695); toniaps@comcast.net.

Todah Rabah

Thanks to the following for their generous contributions to Shir Ami:

- Judy Ganz, in honor of Dr. Leon Meier
- Judy Ganz on the yartzheit of Matt Ganz, Sam Ganz and May Ganz
- Omar Brubaker, in honor of Dr. Leon Meier
- Harriet Skelly, on the yartzheit of her father Benjamin Halpern
- Edith Speceal, former Shir Ami member

A contribution to Shir Ami is a great way to honor, remember, or show appreciation for someone special. It's easy, and all amounts are gratefully accepted. Just send a check and a note to Florrie Finkle, 18730 West Cavendish, Castro Valley, 94552. Florrie will send a card to the person you are honoring, and your dedication will appear on this page.

Thank you to our Oneg Shabbat hosts:

- April 13th: The Liskewicz Family
- April 27th: Barb Haber

Thanks also go to those who hosted our Rabbinic Interns:

- April 13th – 15th: The Skelly Family
- April 27th – 29th: The Heimowitz Family

Community Seder Thanks You's

The very successful Shir Ami Community Seder held on April 7th could not have happened without the amazing support and contributions of many congregants. All aspects of the community seder were based on volunteer support from Shir Ami members: from outreach to shopping and from making wheelbarrows full of charoset to cleaning up at the end of the event. This was truly a collaborative effort with numerous people helping out in all sorts of ways!

Todah Rabah to the Planning Committee who took the lead in organizing the event, purchasing the many and sundry items needed for a perfect Passover seder, and preparing some of the seder items: **Barbara Heimowitz, Maryann Leshin, Toni Schulberg, Harriet Skelly, Diana Zankowsky and Ruth Hartman.**

Special thanks and appreciation to Ruth Hartman and Gary Wolff and to Barbara and Stan Heimowitz for making very generous donations to this event, without which, the event may not have been possible!

Sincere gratitude to the many members who contributed donations of food items, and in particular to Toni Schulberg and Maryann Leshin for contributing numerous items including paper goods, matzo, wine, juice, horseradish and many other needed supplies.

Todah Rabah to those who, in addition to the Planning Committee, helped by bringing food, setting up the room and cleaning up:

- Daryl Berman
- Jodi and Jeff Blum
- Jan Dombrower
- Lilly Erickson
- Sharon Golembo
- Stan Heimowitz
- Danielle Keil
- Sara Lamnin
- Ruth Rosenthal
- Jon Zimmerman

More Todah's..... to the Shir Ami teens, who helped with set-up, serving the food and watching the younger children during the seder:

- ❖ Sophia Blum
- ❖ Evelyn Carmack
- ❖ Lisa Carmack
- ❖ Brenda Mori
- ❖ Hana Hartman
- ❖ Joaquin Ridgell
- ❖ Lola Ridgell
- ❖ Rachel Markus
- ❖ Shashana Markus

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST.... CONGRATULATIONS to Adam Blum for finding the Afikomen!!

Mazel Tov!

Mazel Tov to Alena Liskewicz on the occasion of becoming a Bat Mitzvah on April 14th.

-- AND --

Mazel Tov to Matthew Beckman on the occasion of becoming a Bar Mitzvah on April 28th.

The congregation is very proud of the both of you and your many accomplishments!

Get Well Wishes to Shir Ami members:

- Florrie Finkle who is recuperating from a successful operation
- Ingrid Weinberg, who is regaining her strength after recent illness
- Ruth Levin recovering from knee surgery

Wishing each of you a speedy recovery.

Please send items for the Community Page to Maryann Leshin at leshin236@comcast.net or 510-635-2898. Deadline is the 26th of the month.

Shir Ami Contacts

Area code is (510) unless specified

President:

Ruth Hartman
582-3379

Membership:

Barbara Heimowitz
537-2066

School:

Jodi Blum
881-5672

Religious:

David Schulberg
276-6100

Oneg Shabbat:

Sharon Golembo
795-0607

Newsletter:

Harriet Skelly
538-8105

Newsletter mailing:

Lily Erickson
538-6022

Scrip/eScrip:

Lisa Silver
881-2616

Community Page:

Maryann Leshin
635-2778

Dues:

Toni Schulberg
278-1695

Invoices/Payables:

Inna Massen
881-5646

Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood:

Jan Dombrower
(925) 462-3205

Social Action:

Daryl Berman
538-6022
Sara Lamnin
733-5114

Yahrzeit Listings:

Tonia Schulberg
276-6100

Donations:

General Funds, Special Funds,
Wall Plaques
Florrie Finkle
538-9660



eScrip Families

Renew today!

It's easy to renew:

- Have your Safeway Club Card Number Available
- Visit escrip.com
- Click on **"YES! RENEW"**

**If you have not renewed,
our contributions have
stopped. Renew now to
start earning again!**

Safeway is proud to partner with eScrip to support the education of youth.

If you participated last year, don't forget to renew your commitment to the program to continue receiving Safeway contributions.

If you are not enrolled in the program sign-up today at escrip.com.

Shop Safeway, and earn valuable money for our school or group.

Pareshot Behar (on the mountain) and Bechukotai (if you keep)

On mount Sinai the laws for the sabbatical year are given. The lord also said: "If ye walk in my statutes and keep my commandments, then I will give you rains in their season and the land shall yield her produce and the trees ...their fruit."



Shir Ami Services Friday, May 11th at 8:00 PM

will be led by

Bekah Stern

This is the season's final Service before the Summer series begin

May 12th -- The Bat Mitzvah of Olivia Seideman



Confirmation

Join us on Friday, May 18 at 8 pm
for a special Shabbat Service to celebrate
the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai
and the Confirmation of
Irene Gilchriese and Lola Ridgell

Hear our teens speak about what Judaism means in their lives

Service led by Diana Zankowsky, Sarah Tunik,
and the Shir Ami Confirmation Class

Annual Membership Meeting

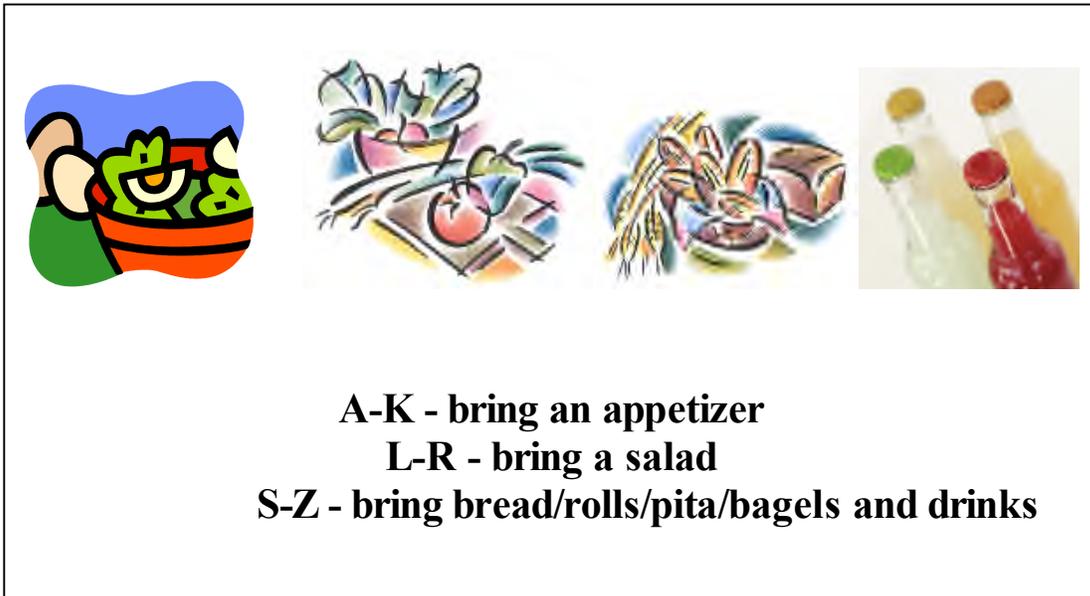
Sunday, May 20 at 12:30 pm at Shir Ami

Board Slate for 2007-2008

- President - Ruth Hartman
- Vice President, Membership - Barbara Heimowitz
- Vice President - Noah Markus
- Secretary - Harriet Skelly
- Treasurer, Receivables - Toni Schulberg
- Treasurer, Payables - Maryann Leshin
- Education - Jodi Blum
- Religious Committee - David Schulberg
- Trustee - Bruce Carter
- Trustee - Barbara Haber
- Trustee - Diana Zankowsky



Shir Ami End of School Year Party
Sunday, 20th May, 2007, 11:30 to 12:30 p.m.
All congregants welcome!
(Shir Ami Annual Meeting starts at 12:30 p.m.)



A-K - bring an appetizer
L-R - bring a salad
S-Z - bring bread/rolls/pita/bagels and drinks



Call Lisa Silver on (510) 881 2616
or email lisa@vineyardunlimited.com to r.s.v.p.
Assistance with set-up/clean-up appreciated please.
Let Lisa know if you can help!



Separate Checks' Reunion

Enjoy a razzle-dazzle
evening with
Separate Checks
Music • Laughter • Fun
Saturday, June 2, 8 p.m.
Palomares Café
3779 E. Castro Valley
Blvd
510-733-5852

sidneysimpson@att.net

